

AFFIDAVIT

I, Michael Palinkas, currently assigned to the Cleveland Division of the FBI as a Task Force Officer, being duly sworn, do state the following:

INTRODUCTION

1. As a Task Force Officer for the FBI, I am an investigative law enforcement officer of the United States of America under 18 U.S.C. § 2510(7) and am empowered by law to conduct investigations and to make arrests for offenses enumerated in 18 U.S.C. § 2516. Further, I am a “Federal law enforcement officer” under Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 41(a)(2)(C).

2. I have been employed by the City of Ashtabula Police Department for nearly nine years, including eight years in the Detective Bureau. During this time, I have served as an investigator with the Trumbull Ashtabula Group (TAG) and then CEAAC which investigated activities of drug trafficking organizations and violent crimes. I currently serve as the commander of the Ashtabula Police Department Narcotic Investigative Unit (APDNIU). The APDNIU, which operates in conjunction with the FBI Safe Streets Task Force, conducts investigations into the activities of drug trafficking organizations, gang related violent crimes, along with other violent crimes which include felonious assaults and homicide. As a Task Force Officer of the FBI and a local investigator, I have participated in narcotics/drug enforcement and the dismantlement of mid to upper-level drug trafficking organizations. I have participated in the planning and execution of long-term investigative operations that have led to the disruption and dismantlement of criminal organizations whose revenues centered primarily on the trafficking and distribution of illicit drugs.

3. I received my OPOTA certificate at the Lakeland Community College and in addition to that has been to numerous narcotic schools throughout his law enforcement career. I have training in the recognition, production, and distribution of controlled substances, and also received advanced training in overall narcotics investigations. I have received field training and accrued practical experience in advanced drug-related investigative techniques that include, but are not limited to, surveillance, interview and interrogation techniques, informant recruitment and control, search warrant and case preparation, and interception and analysis of recorded conversations. I have been involved in controlled undercover purchases of drug evidence and subsequent arrests of defendants charged with drug-related crimes. I have supervised the activities of informants who have provided information concerning controlled substances and organized criminal activities, purchased controlled substances, and supervised consensual monitoring in connection with these investigations. I have utilized various forms of tracking technology to assist in various forms of criminal investigation.

4. I make this affidavit in support of a criminal complaint and arrest warrant for ARTHUR EZELL for violations of: Conspiracy to Possess with the Intent to Distribute Cocaine, Title 21, United States Code, Sections 846 and 841(a)(1); and Possession with Intent to Distribute Cocaine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1).

BASIS OF INFORMATION

5. I am familiar with the facts and circumstances of the offenses described in this Affidavit based upon my personal participation in the investigation of ARTHUR EZELL as well as through information obtained from other law enforcement agencies, witnesses, and reliable sources.

6. Except as otherwise noted, the information set forth in this Affidavit has been provided to me by FBI Agents or other law enforcement officers. Unless otherwise noted, whenever in this Affidavit I assert that a statement was made, the information was provided by another law enforcement officer (who may have had either direct or hearsay knowledge of the statement) to whom I have spoken or whose report you I have read and reviewed. Likewise, information resulting from surveillance, except where otherwise indicated, does not necessarily set forth my observations but rather has been provided directly or indirectly by FBI Agents or other law enforcement officers who conducted such surveillance. Likewise, any information pertaining to vehicles and/or registrations, personal data on subjects and record checks has been obtained through the Law Enforcement Automated Data System (LEADS); from Thompson Reuters, a law enforcement credit header database (CLEAR); from the State of Ohio or the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computers; or by the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway database (OHLEG) by members herein described.

7. Since this Affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of securing the requested arrest warrant, this affidavit does not contain each and every piece of information known to me and other investigators, but rather only information sufficient to establish probable cause to support the requested arrest warrant.

FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES ESTABLISHING PROBABLE CAUSE

8. On Friday, August 30th, 2024, search warrants were obtained via the United States District Court, Northern District of Ohio, for the residences located at 4858 SR 193, Sheffield Township, and 1247 W. 58th St, City of Ashtabula. The search warrants were issued in conjunction with the investigation pertaining to ARTHUR EZELL and his distribution of cocaine. The investigations had revealed that ARTHUR EZELL was utilizing both residences for

the distribution of cocaine. It was determined that 1247 W. 58th St, City of Ashtabula, was occupied by ARTHUR EZELL'S mother, Darlene Jones, and his brother, a Demar Ezell. It was further determined that ARTHUR EZELL was primarily staying at 4858 SR 193, Sheffield Township, with his girlfriend and her family.

9. On Thursday, September 12th, 2024, both search warrants were executed by members of the FBI Safe Street Task Force with the assistance of the Ashtabula Police Department and the Ashtabula County Sheriff's Office.

10. During the execution of the search warrant at 1247 W. 58th St, City of Ashtabula, we located Demar Ezell and Darlene Jones present at the residence. During the search of the residence investigators located approximately 150.8 grams of field "NIK" tested cocaine and \$4,950 in US currency. The items were found concealed inside an air conditioning window unit that was in the attached garage. Investigators also located a digital scale, which appeared to contain suspected cocaine residue, in a bedroom which belonged to Demar Ezell. Investigators also located another bedroom which contained papers addressed to ARTHUR EZELL at 1247 W. 58th St, City of Ashtabula, along with what appeared to be his personal property. During a field interview of Darlene Jones, she indicated that ARTHUR EZELL had been present the previous evening, and along with Demar Ezell, had access to the entire residence, including the attached garage.

11. During the execution of the search warrant at 4858 SR 193, Sheffield Township, we located ARTHUR EZELL, his girlfriend (Julia Dioneff) and her grandmother, a Bonita Dioneff. During the search of the residence investigators located and seized a total of \$8,180 in US currency, a majority of the cash was located concealed in the drop ceiling of the bedroom

which belonged to ARTHUR EZELL and Julia Dioneff. Also seized, were several cell phones which belonged to ARTHUR EZELL. ARTHUR EZELL was also taken into custody.

12. On the morning of Friday, September 13th, 2024, a recorded interview of ARTHUR EZELL was conducted by TFO Gale. ARTHUR EZELL waived his rights under Miranda and proceeded to admit to the distribution of cocaine in and around the Ashtabula area. ARTHUR EZELL also took responsibility for the cocaine and cash that was recovered from his mother's residence located at 1247 W. 58th St, City of Ashtabula. He also admitted that the cash seized from his residence at 4858 SR 193, Sheffield Township, was in part drug proceeds.

13. Investigators have conducted an initial review of the content obtained from ARTHUR EZELL'S cell phones. The cell phones contained numerous communications/messages which are clearly consistent with the distribution of drugs by ARTHUR EZELL.

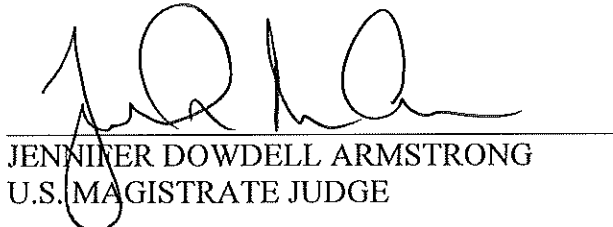
CONCLUSION

14. Based on the foregoing, I believe that there is probable cause to believe that ARTHUR EZELL committed the violations of: Conspiracy to Possess with the Intent to Distribute Cocaine, Title 21, United States Code, Sections 846 and 841(a)(1); and Possession with Intent to Distribute Cocaine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1).



Michael Palinkas
Task Force Officer
Federal Bureau of Investigation

This affidavit was sworn to by the affiant by telephone after a PDF was transmitted by email, per Crim R. 41(d)(3).



JENNIFER DOWDELL ARMSTRONG
U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE

9/18/2024 at 3:55 p.m.
DATE